

by the Administrator in connection with the schools and libraries support mechanism, the rural health care support mechanism, the high cost support mechanism, the low income support mechanism, the interstate access universal service support mechanism, and the interstate common line support mechanism shall be deducted from the annual funding of each respective support mechanism. The expenses deducted from the annual funding for each support mechanism also shall include the Administrator's joint and common costs allocated to each support mechanism pursuant to the cost allocation manual filed by the Administrator under § 64.903 of this chapter.

[63 FR 70576, Dec. 21, 1998, as amended at 65 FR 38690, June 21, 2000; 65 FR 57739, Sept. 26, 2000; 66 FR 59728, Nov. 30, 2001; 69 FR 5719, Feb. 6, 2004]

§ 54.717 Audits of the Administrator.

The Administrator shall obtain and pay for an annual audit conducted by an independent auditor to examine its operations and books of account to determine, among other things, whether the Administrator is properly administering the universal service support mechanisms to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse:

(a) Before selecting an independent auditor, the Administrator shall submit preliminary audit requirements, including the proposed scope of the audit and the extent of compliance and substantive testing, to the Office of Inspector General.

(b) The Office of Inspector General shall review the preliminary audit requirements to determine whether they are adequate to meet the audit objectives. The Office of Inspector General shall prescribe modifications that shall be incorporated into the final audit requirements.

(c) After the audit requirements have been approved by the Office of Inspector General, the Administrator shall engage within thirty (30) calendar days an independent auditor to conduct the annual audit required by this paragraph. In making its selection, the Administrator shall not engage any independent auditor who has been involved in designing any of the accounting or

reporting systems under review in the audit.

(d) The independent auditor selected by the Administrator to conduct the annual audit shall be instructed by the Administrator to develop a detailed audit program based on the final audit requirements and shall be instructed by the Administrator to submit the audit program to the Office of Inspector General. The Office of Inspector General shall review the audit program and make modifications, as needed, that shall be incorporated into the final audit program. During the course of the audit, the Office of Inspector General may direct the Administrator to direct the independent auditor to take any actions necessary to ensure compliance with the audit requirements.

(e) During the course of the audit, the Administrator shall instruct the independent auditor to:

(1) Inform the Office of Inspector General of any revisions to the final audit program or to the scope of the audit;

(2) Notify the Office of Inspector General of any meetings with the Administrator in which audit findings are discussed; and

(3) Submit to the Chief of the Wireline Competition Bureau any accounting or rule interpretations necessary to complete the audit.

(f) Within 105 calendar days after the end of the audit period, but prior to discussing the audit findings with the Administrator, the independent auditor shall be instructed by the Administrator to submit a draft of the audit report to the Office of Inspector General Audit Staff.

(g) The Office of Inspector General shall review the audit findings and audit workpapers and offer its recommendations concerning the conduct of the audit or the audit findings to the independent auditor. Exceptions of the Office of Inspector General to the findings and conclusions of the independent auditor that remain unresolved shall be included in the final audit report.

(h) Within fifteen (15) calendar days after receiving the Office of Inspector General's recommendations and making any revisions to the audit report,

the Administrator shall instruct the independent auditor to submit the audit report to the Administrator for its response to the audit findings. At this time the auditor also must send copies of its audit findings to the Office of Inspector General. The Administrator shall provide the independent auditor time to perform additional audit work recommended by the Office of Inspector General.

(i) Within thirty (30) calendar days after receiving the audit report, the Administrator shall respond to the audit findings and send copies of its response to the Office of Inspector General. The Administrator shall instruct the independent auditor that any reply that the independent auditor wishes to make to the Administrator's responses shall be sent to the Office of Inspector General as well as the Administrator. The Administrator's response and the independent auditor's replies shall be included in the final audit report;

(j) Within ten (10) calendar days after receiving the response of the Administrator, the independent auditor shall file with the Commission the final audit report.

(k) Based on the final audit report, the Inspector General may take any action necessary to ensure that the universal service support mechanisms operate in a manner consistent with the requirements of this Part, as well as such other action as is deemed necessary and in the public interest.

[67 FR 13227, Mar. 21, 2002, as amended at 68 FR 18907, Apr. 17, 2003; 71 FR 38267, July 6, 2006]

Subpart I—Review of Decisions Issued by the Administrator

§ 54.719 Parties permitted to seek review of Administrator decisions.

(a) Any person aggrieved by an action taken by a division of the Administrator, as defined in § 54.701(g), may seek review from the appropriate Committee of the Board, as defined in § 54.705.

(b) Any person aggrieved by an action taken by the Administrator pertaining to a billing, collection or disbursement matter that falls outside the jurisdiction of the Committees of the Board may seek review from the

Board of Directors of the Administrator, as defined in § 54.703.

(c) Any person aggrieved by an action taken by a division of the Administrator, as defined in § 54.701(g), a Committee of the Board of the Administrator, as defined in § 54.705, or the Board of Directors of the Administrator, as defined in § 54.703, may seek review from the Federal Communications Commission, as set forth in § 54.722.

[63 FR 70577, Dec. 21, 1998]

§ 54.720 Filing deadlines.

(a) An affected party requesting review of an Administrator decision by the Commission pursuant to § 54.719(c), shall file such a request within sixty (60) days of the issuance of the decision by a division or Committee of the Board of the Administrator.

(b) An affected party requesting review of a division decision by a Committee of the Board pursuant to § 54.719(a), shall file such request within sixty (60) days of issuance of the decision by the division.

(c) An affected party requesting review by the Board of Directors pursuant to § 54.719(b) regarding a billing, collection, or disbursement matter that falls outside the jurisdiction of the Committees of the Board shall file such request within sixty (60) days of issuance of the Administrator's decision.

(d) The filing of a request for review with a Committee of the Board under § 54.719(a) or with the full Board under § 54.719(b), shall toll the time period for seeking review from the Federal Communications Commission. Where the time for filing an appeal has been tolled, the party that filed the request for review from a Committee of the Board or the full Board shall have sixty (60) days from the date the Committee or the Board issues a decision to file an appeal with the Commission.

(e) In all cases of requests for review filed under § 54.719, the request for review shall be deemed filed on the postmark date. If the postmark date cannot be determined, the applicant must file a sworn affidavit stating the date that the request for review was mailed.